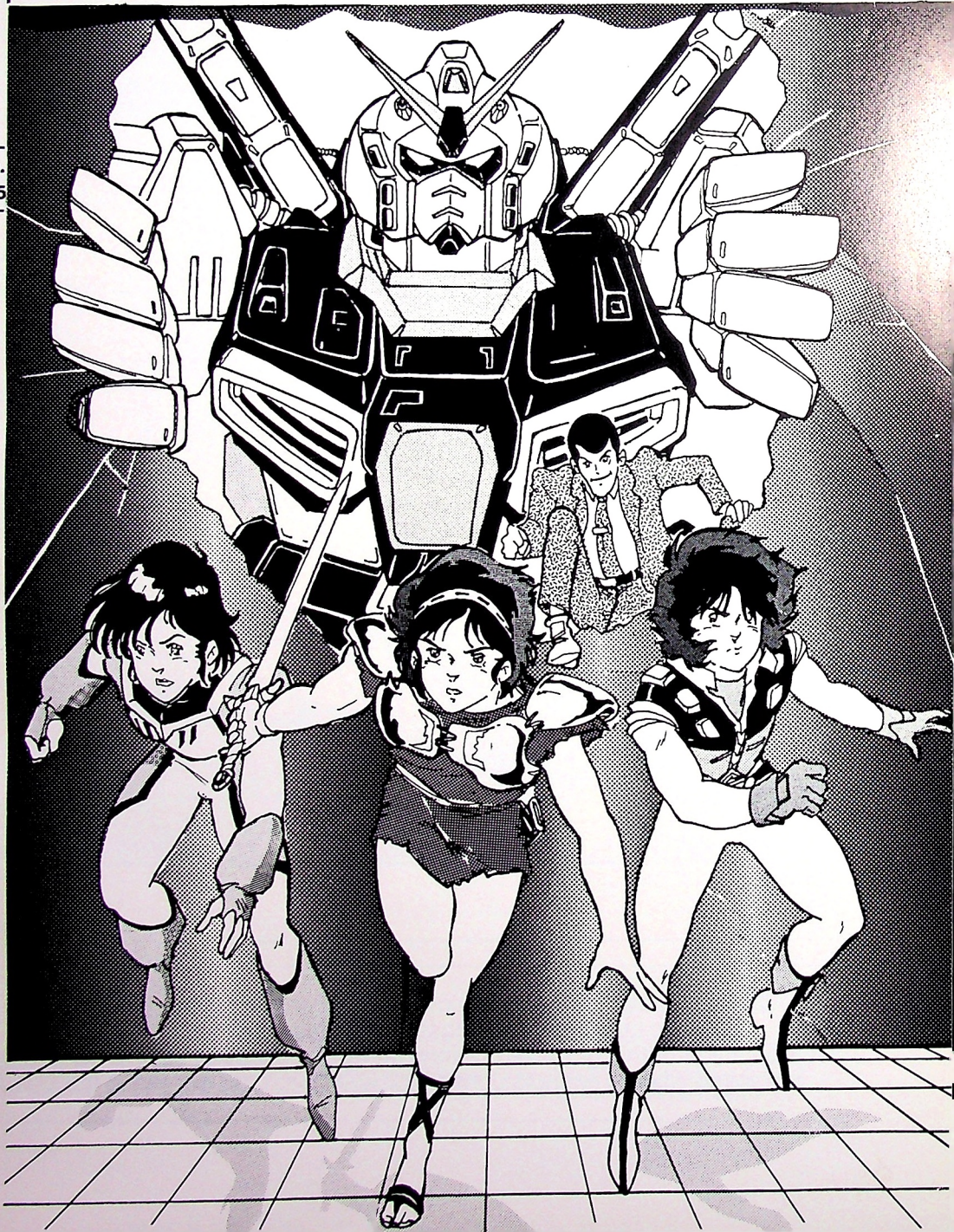




ANIMAGIC LTD.  
VOL. 1 \$3.95

# ***ALL NEW!*** **GAMER'S GUIDE TO ANIME**

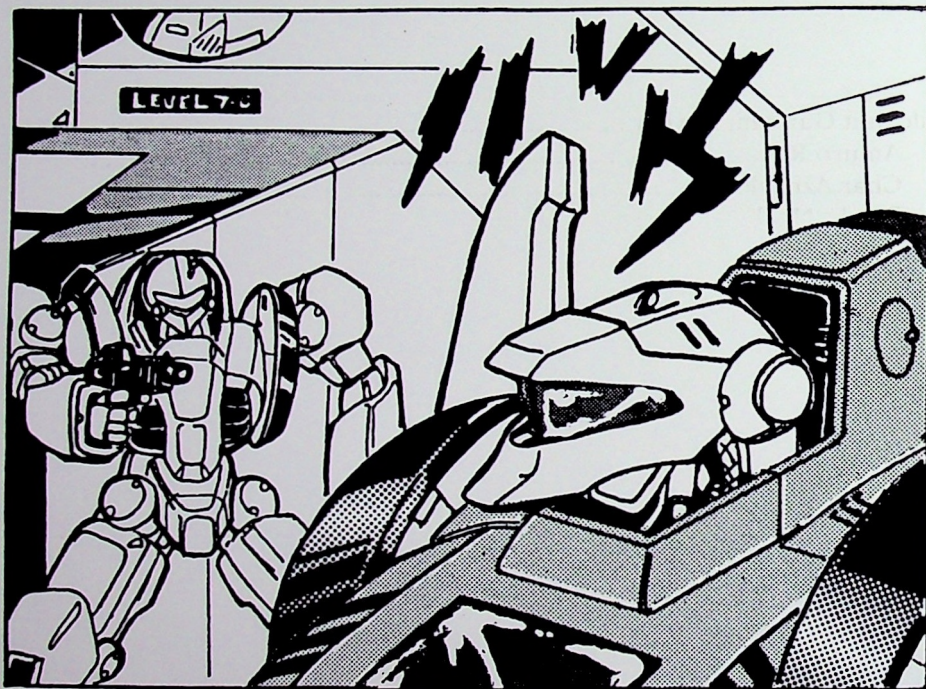
**VOLUME ONE**





AniMagic Ltd. Presents

***ALL NEW!***  
**GAMER'S GUIDE TO ANIME**  
VOLUME ONE



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# ***ALL NEW!***

## **GAMER'S GUIDE TO ANIME**

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Lupin III: Tokyo Movie Shinsha/Monkey Punch; Mobile Suit Gundam: Nippon Sunrise; Orguss: Totsunoko Productions; Arion and Crusher Joe: Yasuhiko Yoshikazu; Megazone 23: Artland Studios; Aura Battler Dunbine: Yoshiyuki Tomino



# INTRODUCTION

There are two main purposes to this publication. First, and most important, is the introduction of Japanese animation to new audiences. Wherever possible, English language sources for films and TV episodes have been listed, and people who are interested in particular programs should visit their local video stores, comic retailers, and fan organizations. The second, and more difficult, goal is to describe various animation characters in terms which would allow them to be used in role-playing games. Since no such source exists, we have taken it upon ourselves to provide our fellow fans with new gaming opportunities.

The reason this second goal is so difficult is that there are many different systems for assigning skills and attributes--almost as many systems as there are games. Most systems boil down to a percentage in one form or another, but the method by which this percentage is arrived at may vary depending upon which dice, if any, are used. Also, the name and range of skills varies from game to game, especially if the game is specific to a particular genre (fantasy, science fiction, western, etc.)

Our solution to this problem is to place attributes and skills in the most general terms possible, allowing the game master and players to determine the most appropriate means of translating a character to a particular game. Standard attributes are listed for all characters, while skills are listed only when the character has displayed particular ability (or lack of ability) in some area. Common sense must therefore be used in the conversion; just because a particular skill is not listed does not mean the character doesn't possess it--it just means that the character may never have used the skill in the shows we have access to.

For example, in the description of Lupin III, a thief, we do not list him as having knowledge of psychology. Though he should reasonably be considered as able to accurately "size up" another person's reactions, he also has no formal training in psychology. In a situation such as this, a game master should allow reasonable leeway in assigning the degree of Lupin's skill. Ultimately, it will be up to the game master to determine what is reasonable and what is not. Skills are listed by whatever name seems most appropriate, and our list is not to be considered exhaustive.

The attributes which we list for each character are Strength, Constitution, Dexterity, Intelligence, Charisma, Personality, and Alignment. There may be more specific attributes in some games which aren't on this list, so reasonable assumptions may have to be made. For example, a game may list Endurance as an attribute, which may fall somewhere between Strength and Constitution on our list. Similarly, we don't list Wisdom, but game masters can extrapolate from Intelligence and Personality.

Both gamers and game masters are encouraged to view programs featuring the characters they are interested in using. Not only will this provide insight into the character's abilities and personality, it'll also be fun. Plus, you may discover details which we've missed. Above all, have fun.



## STATS AND SKILLS

Below is a brief explanation the various character statistics used in our listings, and some of the more common skills. Our assessments are often based upon a limited number of films or episodes, so game masters should be willing to take into account any information available. Please also take into account that animation characters will tend to score fairly highly: these are exceptional characters possessing special skills and/or experiences which make them interesting enough to be central figures of tv shows and motion pictures.

- Strength:** This is simply a measure of a character's raw physical power, in relation to other normal human beings. In assigning this stat, we watched for whether a character was given to lifting heavy objects, or whether they crumpled easily under relatively light loads. It should be noted that an average adult male's strength would tend to be higher than an woman's.
- Dexterity:** This stat measures the degree to which one can perform tasks requiring speed, agility, or fine motor control. A character is given a higher rating in this category when he/she is shown to have a skill which utilizes one of the facets of dexterity (swordsmanship, lockpick, etc.)
- Constitution:** This is a measurement of how much physical damage a person can take before becoming unable to function, as well as how quickly they recover from injury. Adult women tend to have a higher average constitution than men.
- Intelligence:** This tells how quickly a character is able to learn and to utilize facts in new ways. The more intelligent a character is, the more likely she/he is successfully plan a strategy, and to gain the advantage in a situation. Characters are rated higher for showing foresight, quick wits, or an obvious high degree of knowledge.
- Personality:** This is an attempt to sum up in one word the main aspect of a character's personality. Many animation characters display different sides of their personality in different situations, so it is impossible to sum up the minute details in such a small space. This stat tells how a casual observer might describe the character; an initial reaction.
- Charisma:** This tells how witty and charming one is, and how easily one is able to sway another's opinions. Characters are given higher charisma if they are the leader of a group, or if they are frequently shown with admiring members of the opposite sex, or both.
- Alignment:** This is an attempt to show a character's basic motivation. Most characters listed are "good," but they vary greatly in how they decide to carry out their "good" actions. Simply put, "good" means a character tends to help others. "Lawful" people prefer to follow standard social rules and laws. "Neutral" people will occasionally use expedient means, whether or not said means are socially acceptable. "Chaotic" people are willing to use extreme, illegal, and sometimes violent means to reach their goals.
- Skills:** Skill names are considered to be self-explanatory. A character is assigned an ability level at a skill by how successful they are when attempting a particular action. Characters involved in frequent car-chases would have a higher driving skill; those who often engage in gun battle would have firearms skill.

These stats and skills may or may not fit the characteristics needed for a particular game. That is why it is strongly recommended that gamers and game masters find and watch the appropriate shows.



In assigning levels to attributes, we use the following guidelines:

| Level          | Attribute   | Skill  |
|----------------|---|--|
| None:          | Character possesses no trace of this attribute. This is a very unlikely situation, unless the person is not a normal human being.   | Character has no ability in this area.   |
| Poor:          | Character is noticeably well below normal in this area.   | Character possesses rudimentary knowledge and ability. A novice.   |
| Below Average: | Character is slightly below normal in this area.  | Character has minimal training and experience.   |
| Average:       | Character possesses a typical level of this attribute.  | Character is competent in this area, having completed basic training or gained field experience.   |
| Above Average: | Character is better than most in this area.   | Character has high general ability and knowledge, but may be lacking in some areas.  |
| Superior:      | Character possesses this trait to a much greater degree than is standard. An exceptional person.  | Character is familiar with all information and every technique associated with this skill, though not quite expert. A craftsman rather than an artist.   |
| God-Like:      | Character has an apparently inexhaustible degree of this attribute. This is almost as rare as "None," and would only be assigned to characters who go beyond what would be considered humanly possible. | As a skill, this level is referred to as "Expert." A character who is expert knows all there is to know and can perform any action associated with a skill. Also, may innovate and quickly assimilate other's innovations. |



# Lupin III

Imagine mixing the television series "It Takes A Thief" and "Mission Impossible," adding dashes of James Bond, then topping it all off with portions of "The Three Stooges." The result might be something like "Lupin III," an immensely successful comic, TV, and movie series from creator Monkey Punch.

**Lupin III** (commonly pronounced "Lupin the Third") concerns the world-spanning adventures of the title character, who is the great-grandson of Arsne Lupin, a famous French thief. Joining Lupin are Jigen Daisuke, an American marksman, and Goemon Ishikawa, a Japanese thief who follows the code of Bushido. A frequent companion of Lupin is Fujiko Mine, a beautiful and capable female thief. The indestructible Detective Zenigata is always in close pursuit, occasionally capturing (but never keeping) Lupin. This cast travels through Europe, Asia, and the Americas in capers which alternate between hilarity and drama.

Despite being centered around a thief, the series has a strong underlying sense of fair play. Neither Lupin nor his crew would deliberately harm an innocent by-stander; they often risk capture or failure in order to help someone in need. Even Zenigata, the dedicated lawman, has respect for this aspect of Lupin's personality and will defend Lupin against those who accuse Lupin of harming others. In fact, many stories cast Lupin into action against organized criminals and terrorists who lack any respect for others, and Lupin seldom, if ever, steals from anyone who can't survive the loss.



Lupin III



Fujiko

Though Lupin has been done by many artist/directors, his finest incarnation is in film and TV episodes by Miyazaki Hayao, who is also known for *Nausicaä*, *Laputa*, and *Kiku's Delivery Service*. His film, *Castle Cagliostro* (also known as *Cagliostro Castle* and *Chateau de Cagliostro*) is one of the world's greatest animated features, offering a surprisingly satisfying mix of suspense, silliness, and sentiment. The episode *Albatross* is generally considered to be the best single show from the many Lupin TV series. Either of these programs would make an excellent introduction to Japanese animation in general and **Lupin III** in particular.

**Castle Cagliostro** begins as Lupin robs a casino, only to discover that his loot is made up entirely of counterfeit money--Ghoto bills. The search for the source of the Ghoto bills leads Lupin, Jigen, and Goemon to a tiny European country where Clarisse, a young noble, is about to be married against her will. Lupin is very fatherly and protective towards young women, and Clarisse once saved his life, so Lupin makes it his cause to rescue her and destroy the counterfeit ring. Teaming up with Fujiko, who

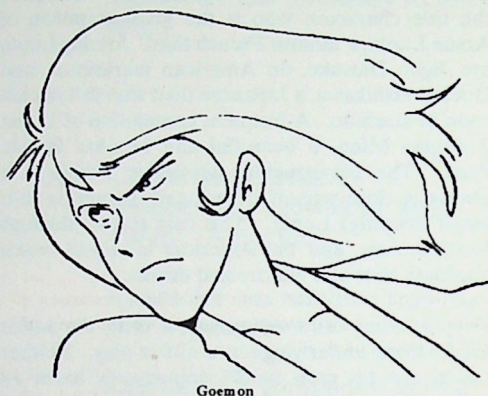


is on a similar quest, Lupin manages to save the day, rescuing Clarisse from death and her entire country from bankruptcy.

Along the way, the viewer is treated to incredible chase scenes, intricate story-lines, and amazingly detailed animation. We see all sides of Lupin's personality, as well as the teamwork and loyalty of his group. Clarisse, who appears only in this one film, is regularly voted as one of the ten most popular animated female characters in Japanese opinion polls, probably in recognition of her courage and quiet strength.

In *Albatross*, Lupin and his men are propelled into action when Fujiko disturbs their dinner as she runs for her life from armed attackers. As she returns automatic weapon fire, Fujiko slips Lupin an object which he later recognizes as a nuclear triggering device. Fujiko is captured and Lupin traces her captors to an airplane museum where Dr. Lonebach has been restoring the fabled Albatross, the spitting image of the Spruce Goose. What follows is some of the most hilarious slap-stick and hair raising action ever produced for television.

Both aforementioned shows feature many aspects which are present in every incarnation of *Lupin III*, especially the artful juxtaposition of fantasy and reality. In *Albatross*, "Looney Tunes" style comic antics are cast against a very real backdrop of nuclear terrorism, and in many other episodes similar impossible action sequences are played off against touching scenes of emotional sacrifice and strength. In all versions of *Lupin* is Monkey Punch's characteristic handling of his characters--Lupin, Zenigata, and others are drawn as cartoon caricatures, while the physical objects around them are drawn with almost photographic accuracy. In *Lupin vs The Clones*, Goemon at one point comments to Jigen that "You and I are the most ridiculous things in this scene." a comment which plays with reality on several levels--does Goemon realize that he's merely a character in a film?



Goemon



Det. Zenigata

Lupin has appeared in numerous black-and-white Japanese manga, anime comics (full color reproduction of animation in comic book form), TV shows and films. Shortly after the game "Dragon Slayer" gained popularity, footage from *Castle Cagliostro* was used in creating the game *Cliff Hanger*. Every incarnation is entertaining and *Lupin* is justly considered one of the finest series of all Japanese animation.

**Lupin Tidbit:** Some of the music for *Lupin III* was written by Ono Yuji, sister of Yoko Ono.



## Lupin III

Lupin is the great-grandson of the famous French thief Arsne Lupin, and takes his family tradition quite seriously. While he made a few mistakes in his youth (as witnessed in "Castle Cagliostro" flashbacks), he is now in his prime and can rightly claim the title of world's greatest thief.

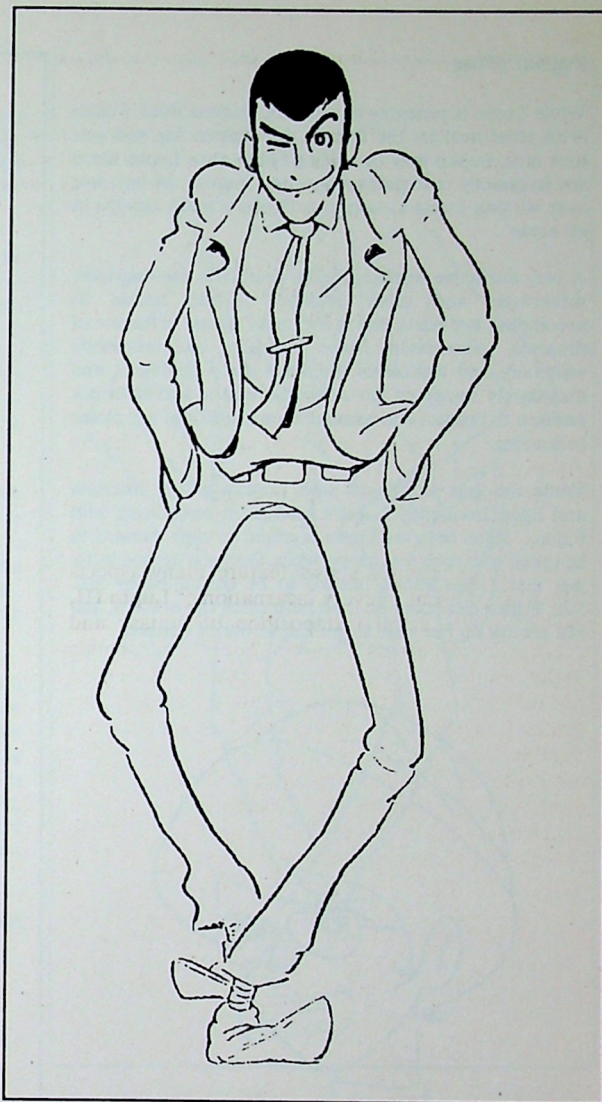
Pride in his accomplishments gets Lupin in the greatest trouble. He cannot rest knowing that someone claims to have designed an unbeatable security system, and has been known to chance capture just to prove his skill. After pride, Lupin's second greatest weakness is lechery. More than once his desire for Fujika has led him to drop his guard--and lose his loot to her.

Counter-balancing Lupin's emotional failings is his underlying sense of morality. Lupin rarely causes purposeful harm to innocent individuals, always repays favors done for him (eventually), and takes a very fatherly attitude toward young women. Even Det. Zenigata, who would like nothing more than to put Lupin behind bars, must admit that Lupin possesses a certain nobility which elevates him above the level of common lawbreaker.

Lupin is an attractive, if thin, man in his late twenties to mid-thirties. He has an air of confidence which is quite frequently shattered by almost childish displays of laughter or anger. Though he is not particularly strong, Lupin possesses great endurance and tenacity. He has a very active mind requiring constant stimulation, yet is quite capable of focussing on a single problem for as long as necessary.

In reaching his current status as master thief, Lupin has developed numerous skills and amassed a great store of knowledge and experience. He is athletic, very dexterous, an expert lock-pick and has an almost infallible ability to turn any situation to his own advantage. Other special abilities include driving, above average marksmanship, and disguise (his favorite disguise is as Det. Zenigata.) In short, Lupin is abundantly prepared for any turn of events.

In English translations of Lupin, Lupin may also be know as Wolf or Cliff Hanger.



**Lupin Tidbit:** Shortly after the appearance of the "Cliff Hanger" Video game, a "Cliff Hanger" TV series, based on the Japanese TV series, was advertised in *Variety*. It is uncertain whether the series actually ran in the U.S.

### STATS

|               |              |
|---------------|--------------|
| Strength:     | Average      |
| Dexterity:    | God-Like     |
| Constitution: | Superior     |
| Intelligence: | Superior     |
| Personality:  | Volatile     |
| Charisma:     | Superior     |
| Alignment:    | Chaotic Good |

### SKILLS

|              |               |
|--------------|---------------|
| Lock-Pick:   | Expert        |
| Detect trap: | Expert        |
| Weapons:     | Above Average |
| Driving:     | Above Average |
| Disguise:    | Expert        |
| Strategy:    | Expert        |

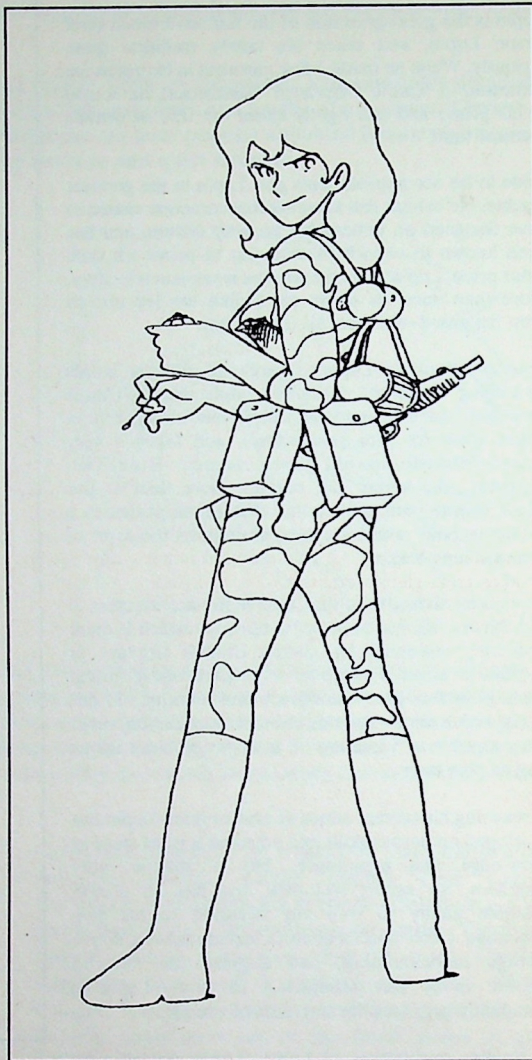


## Fujiko Mine

While Lupin is probably the world's greatest thief, Fujiko is his chief rival for the title. In fact, depending how you look at it, Fujiko may be slightly better than Lupin, since she frequently manipulates him into stealing for her. But even without Lupin's assistance, Fujiko is quite capable in all areas.

A very attractive woman, Fujiko prefers to use disguises, subterfuge, and other relatively subtle means to accomplish her goals. She is also quite skilled in the use of firearms, occasionally even bringing out automatic weaponry and explosives. Fujiko is quite intelligent and abundantly aware of her affect on males, and does not hesitate to distract and mislead men if it brings her closer to success.

While she gets along well with Lupin's group, Goemon and Jigen frequently Lupin's wisdom in associating with Fujiko. Jigen believes Lupin is stupid to allow himself to be taken with such frequency, while Goemon bemoans the fact that Lupin allows himself to be controlled by lust. Still, Fujiko can count on their help when she needs it, and will always do her best to get Lupin out of danger.



**Fujiko Tidbit:** Fujiko's name roughly translates as "Mount Fuji," obvious reference to an aspect of her anatomy.

### STATS

|               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| Strength:     | Average       |
| Dexterity:    | Above Average |
| Constitution: | Above Average |
| Intelligence: | Superior      |
| Personality:  | Outgoing      |
| Charisma:     | Superior      |
| Alignment:    | Chaotic Good  |

### SKILLS

|              |               |
|--------------|---------------|
| Lock-Pick:   | Above Average |
| Detect Trap: | Above Average |
| Weapons:     | Above Average |
| Explosives:  | Above Average |
| Driving:     | Above Average |
| Disguise:    | Average       |



## Detective Zenigata

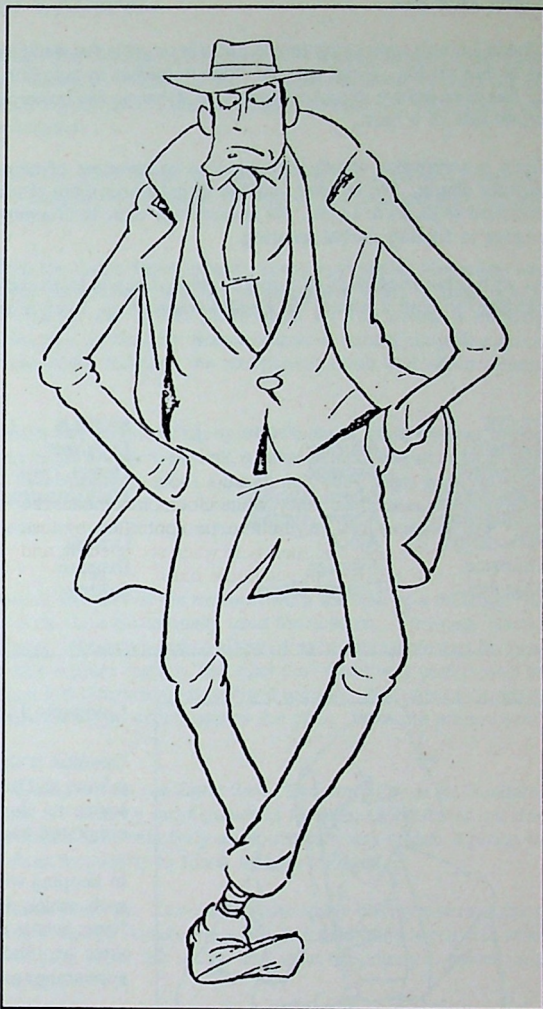
Zenigata is a seventh-generation lawman who has given his life to his career, forsaking his family to pursue Lupin. Zenigata claims that he is the only person able to capture Lupin, and he may be right. Certainly, no other law enforcement official has Zenigata's determination.

Beginning as a Japanese officer, Zenigata has become an Interpol operative in order to follow Lupin anywhere in the world. During the years, he has developed a great store of knowledge on Lupin and is often able to anticipate Lupin's next course of action (but *never* well enough to bring Lupin to justice.) While he respects Lupin's abilities, Zenigata nonetheless respects the law more. Still, Zenigata will occasionally aid Lupin, if he believes Lupin is working for some greater good.

Zenigata's endurance, mentally and physically, is his greatest strength. He has suffered humiliation after humiliation at the hands of Lupin, yet still manages to keep up the chase. The flip-side to this is that Zenigata has become obsessed—he almost literally eats, breathes, and sleeps Lupin. All this attention amuses Lupin, who takes great glee in embarrassing Zenigata.

A average-looking, though somewhat stoic man, Zenigata has a commanding air under normal situations. In the presence of Lupin, he quite frequently loses his cool and may even engage in an out-and-out brawl. In chasing Lupin, Zenigata has learned many of the same skills as Lupin, though never to the same degree. In short, Zenigata is an almost perfect lawman, except for the fact that he has never successfully captured Lupin, his greatest adversary.

In English translations of Lupin, Zenigata is known as Ed Kott.



### STATS

|               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| Strength:     | Above Average |
| Dexterity:    | Above Average |
| Constitution: | God-Like      |
| Intelligence: | Superior      |
| Personality:  | Single-minded |
| Charisma:     | Average       |
| Alignment:    | Lawful Good   |

### Skills

|              |               |
|--------------|---------------|
| Lock-pick:   | Above Average |
| Detect Trap: | Below Average |
| Weapons:     | Expert        |
| Driving:     | Above Average |
| Disguise:    | Above Average |
| Strategy:    | Above Average |
| Law:         | Expert        |

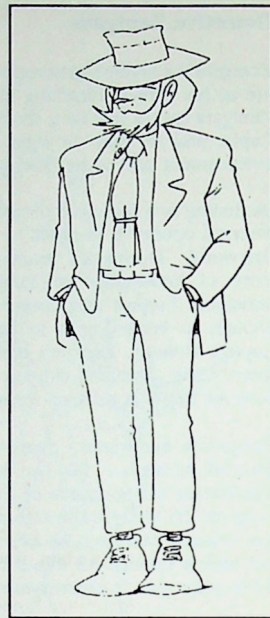


## Jigen Daisuke

One of Lupin's loyal companions, Jigen is possibly the world's greatest marksman--as long as he has his hat. Jigen uses the brim of his hat to help line up his shots. With the hat he has been known to make as many as 50 successive bullseyes; without it he can't hit the broad side of a barn.

Jigen is somewhat scruffy looking, due to his mass of hair and beard, though he not without charm. He is quite capable in most areas, but tends to leave the planning and selection of heists to Lupin. He is extremely close to Goemon, though the two constantly engage in friendly verbal sparring.

As with other member's of Lupin's crowd, Jigen is loyal and willing to go through great hardship to help a friend. In English translations, Jigen is also known as Dan Dunn.



### STATS

|               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| Strength:     | Average       |
| Dexterity:    | Average       |
| Constitution: | Above Average |
| Intelligence: | Above Average |
| Personality:  | Aloof         |
| Charisma:     | Average       |
| Alignment:    | Chaotic Good  |

### SKILLS

|               |                                   |
|---------------|-----------------------------------|
| Lock-pick:    | Above Average                     |
| Detect Trap:  | Above Average                     |
| Marksmanship: | With Hat: Expert<br>Without: Poor |
| Driving:      | Expert                            |
| Disguise:     | Above Average                     |
| Strategy:     | Above Average                     |



## Goemon Ishikawa

Goemon is the thirteenth in a line of Japanese thieves. He is extremely private and lives by the bushido code. Goemon's general respect for others seems to clash with his career as a thief; at times it seems as if he's appointed himself as Lupin's personal guardian angel.

In keeping with his code, Goemon always dresses in traditional Japanese garb, which means he must frequently remain in hiding while Lupin and Jigen pursue more active roles. This fits Goemon's personality, however, since he tends to be contemplative and meditative. He is average in appearance and apparently has little experience with, or desire for, women.

Goemon's greatest skill is the use of a special katana with which he can cut almost anything. At one point, Goemon uses his sword to cut the propeller of an airborne helicopter, while another time he chops down a redwood with one stroke. On more than one occasion, Goemon has sliced burning clothing off Lupin, while Lupin was flying through the air following an explosion. In English translations, Goemon is known as Samurai.

### STATS

|               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| Strength:     | Above Average |
| Dexterity:    | Superior      |
| Constitution: | Above Average |
| Intelligence: | Above Average |
| Personality:  | Very Aloof    |
| Charisma:     | Average       |
| Alignment:    | Chaotic Good  |

### SKILLS

|                |               |
|----------------|---------------|
| Detect Trap:   | Above Average |
| Swordsmanship: | Expert        |
| Driving:       | Below Average |
| Disguise:      | Average       |
| Tactics:       | Superior      |



## Mobile Suit Gundam

As one of the most intricate, realistic series ever created, **Mobile Suit Gundam** is difficult to describe, except in the most general terms. This series features gritty war-time action, awe-inspiring scientific detail, complex character interaction, all against a fully realized hard Science Fiction background. This program, accessible to all ages, brought the Japanese giant robot out of realm of kiddie action/adventure and into respectability.

Every aspect of this series shows a great amount of effort, which has made it one of the most popular Japanese programs of all time. Merchandising from the series includes over 100 models, hundreds of magazines and comics, and literally thousands of toys, records, cards, and collectors items.



Char Aznable

The **Gundam** story-line occurs within the Earth-Moon system, in the year 0080. Humanity has stepped out into space, with a large percentage of Earth's population living in huge space colonies, known as "Sides." On Side 3, the nation **Jion**, ruled by the **Zabis**, is seeking independence from Earth and has taken a particularly violent course of action: dropping space colonies on Earth cities. As one can easily imagine, the destruction rivals that of an atomic bomb.

In anticipation of space warfare, Earth has been developing **Mobile Suits**, giant combat armor in roughly humanoid shape. Early versions include **Guntank**, a large ground assault vehicle with tank-like tread and cannons, and **Guncannon**, a giant fighting suit with huge guns on both shoulders. These two combat suits were functional, but limited in their usefulness. **Guncannon**, for example, had to be braced in order to avoid being overturned by its own weapons fire. The

third mobile suit, **Gundam**, was the most successful.

**Gundam**, like many other Japanese robots, resembles an armored samurai—if the samurai were the size of a building. Its armament includes two beam sabers and a rifle-like gun, and a shield is occasionally used for defense. Various placed jets allow **Gundam** to fly, both in high and micro-gravity situations. **Gundam's** design allows it to be adaptable and for new weapons to be quickly fashioned. Since **Gundam** is shaped like a giant human, the pilot can intuitively understand its movements. A variation which sets **Gundam** apart from **Guntank** and **Guncannon** is its chest section. This part of **Gundam** can be removed and becomes the **Core Fighter**, a highly maneuverable jet which houses the pilot. With the pilot absent, **Gundam** is capable of independent action.

On the other side of the battlelines, the **Zabi** have their own fighting armor, the **Zaku Suit**. Developed prior to **Gundam**, the **Zaku Suits** can use weapons in a manner similar to **Gundam**, are actually more powerful than the **Gundam** series, due to their more powerful internal nuclear plants. The **Zaku's** weakness is its relatively weak armor which makes it prone to explode once damaged. For this reason, the **Zaku** are used most frequently in sneak attacks or raids.

It is one such raid which forces **Amuro Rei** to enter into the Earth/Jion war. **Zaku** attack the space colony where **Amuro** lives, forcing him to seek a safe spot. When he is unable to reach a shelter, **Amuro** finds **Gundam** and quickly realizes what he must do. Using the giant fighting armor, **Amuro** is able to help repel the attack and save his colony. **Amuro** and **Gundam** are taken aboard **White Base**, a sphinx-shaped space ship.

**White Base** is a military ship being used to pick up the prototype battle suits. Because of the surprise attack, many of the ship's senior officers were killed or wounded, necessitating that junior officers take control. Soon, the ship becomes Earth's primary line of defense, its crew made up almost entirely of teenagers.

Fighting against **White Base** is **Char Aznable**, who has disguised himself in order to infiltrate **Jion**. He becomes **Jion's** greatest pilot and, taking a turn from the **Red Baron**, pilots a red **Zaku** and calls himself the **Crimson Comet**. **Char** has his own agenda, plotting revenge against the ruling **Zabi** family which killed his father.

To this mix is added the concept of **New Type** humans. **New Types** are the next step in human evolution, they are above average in most every way and once "activated" (by the presence of an already activated **New Type**) gain even more special abilities. After activation, **New Types** become stronger, faster, and smarter, and even have the ability to mentally communicate with other **New Types**. This special form of



Amuro Rei



telepathy is highly empathic and only occurs between New Types. Some New Types gain individualized abilities, a notable example being Char's limited precognition which makes it almost impossible to surprise him in battle.

During the course of the series, each major character must come to grips with the changes the war has brought. Amuro must reconcile his pacifism with the realities of battle. Char must fight a two-front war, truly loyal to neither side of the great conflict. Bright Noah, the acting captain of White Base, and his crew must learn to function well beyond their training, and the populations of Earth and the space colonies must struggle just to survive.



Bright Noah

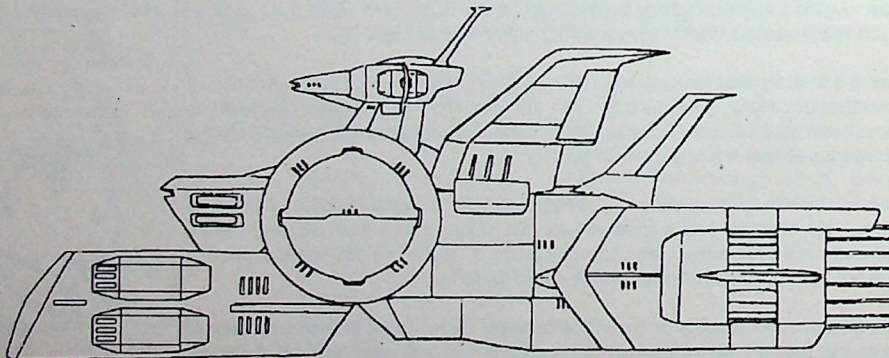
**Mobile Suit Gundam** is the first of several Gundam TV series, which include **Zeta Gundam** and **ZZ Gundam** (Double Zeta Gundam). Episodes were edited into three full-length films, and a later **Nu Gundam** was created as a direct theatrical release. Compared to later series, **Mobile Suit Gundam's** animation is not as fluid or colorful, but this is possibly the series' only weakness.

Very little exists in English translation, requiring effort on the part of non-Japanese speaking viewers to understand the complex story. A series of novels has been published in English, but they are **not** exactly the same stories as the TV show or films. Still, if you are at all interested in Japanese animation you should make the effort, as **Gundam** is considered to be one of the classics of the genre.

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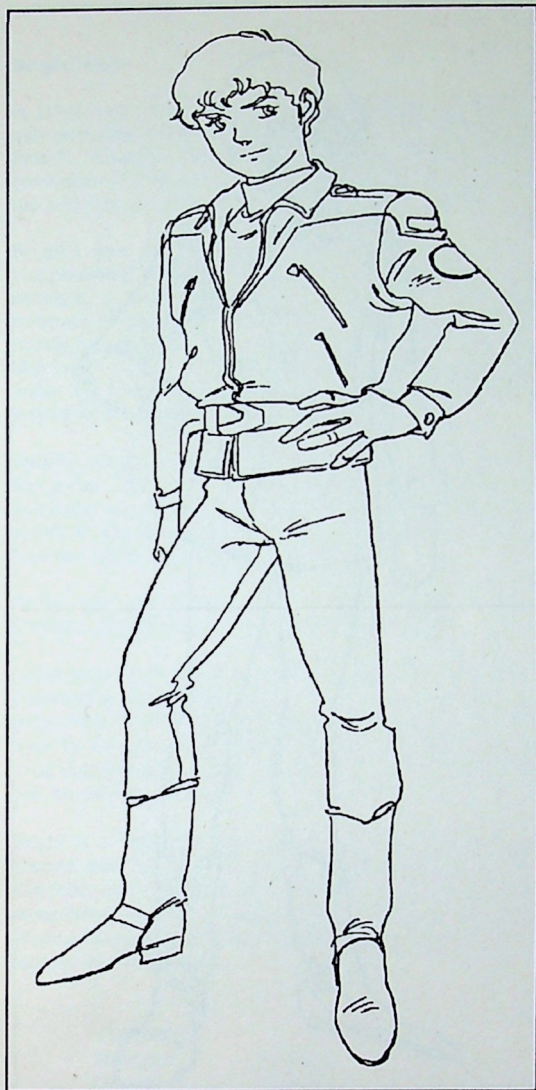
Below: White Base, the primary Earth defense spacecraft used in **Mobile Suit Gundam**, functioning very much like a naval aircraft carrier. As can be seen from this illustration, the ship is shaped something like a sphinx. The portions which would be the legs on a sphinx function as vehicle bays from which mobile suits and other craft can be launched, stored, and repaired.

The ship has no artificial gravity, though the interior is designed to work in any gravitational environment. When in space, crewmembers can take advantage of microgravity and float where they want to go, guided by special handles which pull them down corridors. Once they arrive at their desired location, velcro style surfaces hold the crewmember in place.



White Base





## Amuro Rei

Amuro is the 15-year-old son of Dr. Tem Rei, the scientist who designed the prototype combat armor Mobile Suit Gundam. During an assault on the space colony where he lives, Amuro is thrust into a situation where he must take control of the giant fighting machine merely to survive—even though he has no training and has never even seen Gundam before. Due to his inherent understanding of technology and his ability to instantly assimilate detailed instruction manuals, Amuro is able to successfully pilot Gundam through an entire war.

Working in Amuro's favor is the fact that he is **New Type**—the next step in human evolution. New Types are faster, stronger, and more intelligent than normal humans, but must be "activated" to reach their full potential. Once activated, a New Type gains limited psychic powers which allow mental communication with other New Types, under certain (usually stressful) situations. If three or more New Type are in communication, they may form a temporary mass mind. New Types may also have individual abilities; in Amuro's case it is his talent for quickly learning new technology.

As a pacifist, Amuro is torn by the fact that he is piloting a weapon of destruction, made all the more worse by the fact that his own father designed the weapon. Throughout the war, Amuro gradually accepts that he must fight to protect those he loves, and to ensure that the new Mobile Suits are not misused. Further complicating his life are the usual problems facing teens, topped off by his tendency to immediately fall in love with virtually any woman he meets.

Amuro's combat abilities are uncertain at first, but his massive talent with Gundam more than makes up for his lack military training. He is often quite emotional, making quick attachments and occasionally being insubordinate. He is undergoing a painful transition to manhood which is not helped by the fact that his status as New Type sets him apart from most everyone around him.

In successive **Gundam** series, Amuro returns as an adult and we discover that the abilities which made him a hero during the Earth/Jion war have led him to become something of a prisoner; Amuro's innate abilities make him the subject of government concern.

### STATS

|               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| Strength:     | Above Average |
| Dexterity:    | Above Average |
| Constitution: | Above Average |
| Intelligence: | Superior      |
| Personality:  | Moody         |
| Charisma:     | Average       |
| Alignment:    | Lawful Good   |

### SKILLS

|                     |          |
|---------------------|----------|
| Piloting:           | Superior |
| New Type Telepathy: | Average  |
| Mobile Suit:        | Superior |
| Learn:              | Expert   |



## Char Aznable

Char is possibly Gundam's most charismatic character, a twenty-year-old possessing immense self-assurance, great physical beauty, and amazing combat skill. Char's perseverance and motivation makes him one of animation's most interesting characters.

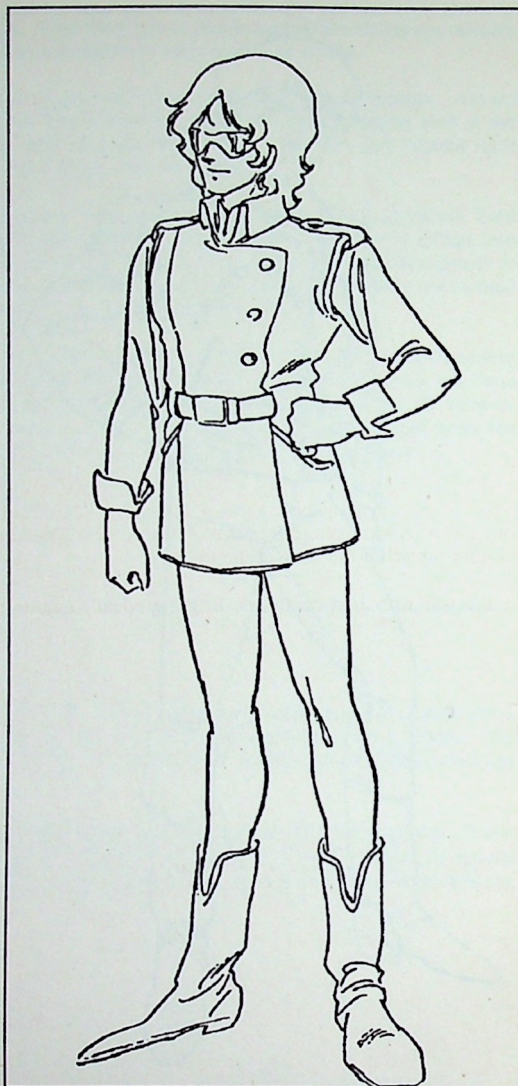
Driven into hiding following the murder of his parents, Char masks himself to infiltrate the Zabi family which rule Jion. His natural abilities make it easy for Char to work his way up the ranks, quickly becoming Jion's most celebrated pilot even as he plots the death of the Zabis. He becomes known as the Crimson Comet, partly for his devastating raids and partly in reference to his red Zaku suit, whose color is an apparent tribute to the Red Baron.

Adding to Char's superior talents is the fact that he is a New Type, the next step in human evolution. While a New Type functions well above the average human, Char is very nearly the pinnacle of New Types. In addition to the standard New Type psionic abilities, Char has a limited form of precognition which allows him to sense immediate personal danger. It is almost impossible to surprise Char in battle, and even harder to make a direct hit. If Char has even a moment to react, he can and will dodge any assault.

Tall, blonde, and very handsome, Char is a dashing figure. He is extremely vital, as capable in hand-to-hand combat as he is in ship-to-ship. Even while disguised, Char's strong personality shows through, making it easy for him to win the confidence of others and take command of almost any situation.

Char is trapped between the two factions of the Earth/Jion war. He is willing to carry out Jion orders since it allows him to move closer to the Zabi family, but must carefully weigh any attacks against White Base since he's discovered his sister is stationed there.

In successive *Gundam* series, Char reappears, this time only half-heartedly in disguise. He and Amuro finally find themselves working for similar purposes, though Char never completely subjects himself to anyone else's command.



### STATS

|               |                |
|---------------|----------------|
| Strength:     | Superior       |
| Dexterity:    | Superior       |
| Constitution: | Superior       |
| Intelligence: | Superior       |
| Personality:  | Self-assured   |
| Charisma:     | Superior       |
| Alignment:    | Lawful Neutral |

### SKILLS

|                     |          |
|---------------------|----------|
| Pilot Mobile Suit:  | Superior |
| Detect Trap/Danger: | Expert   |
| New Type Telepathy: | Superior |
| Strategy/Tactics:   | Expert   |
| Marksmanship:       | Superior |



### Bright Noah

A 19-year-old Brit on his first mission, Bright was White Base's quartermaster when the ship was suddenly attacked on its way to Side 7. After the battle, Bright finds himself the highest ranking crewmember who is still alive and uninjured, requiring him to take the position of captain despite his lack of experience.

Bright's new crew is largely as inexperienced as he, merely compounding White Base's problems. The ship's new pilot, for example, is rated on gliders--this is a situation akin to putting someone in control of a 747 because they've been trained on an ultralight. Working in the crews favor is the fact that each of them rises to meet the situation, finding the strength to carry on under the most extreme adversity. It doesn't hurt matters that several of the crewmembers are also New Type.

Initially, Bright reacts poorly to the stresses of his new position. He is an unforgiving commander, tending to keep order by punching out anyone who creates a disruption. Particularly, he comes at odds with Amuro Rei, due to Amuro's early hesitance to consider himself a member of the military.

As the war with Jion continues, Bright gradually adjusts to the situation and becomes an excellent commander.

In the series **Z-Gundam**, Bright finds himself treated quite poorly considering his military record. The new Earth government is quite wary of New Types, and Bright's association with several New Types apparently puts his loyalty in question. He's assigned to an unimportant position which is intended to encourage him to end his military career.

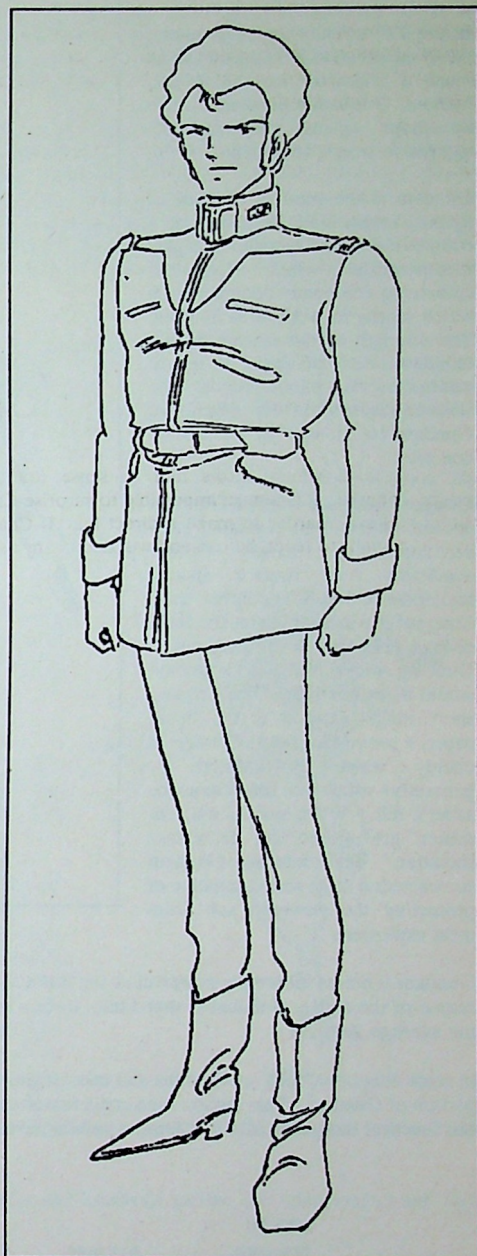
Bright is a tall, handsome young man who masks his personal uncertainties behind a facade of military propriety. He is easily flustered when those around him do not act according to his sensibilities, be they his subordinates or superiors. He has the general knowledge and skill which would be appropriate to the captain of a spacecraft.

#### STATS

|               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| Strength:     | Average       |
| Dexterity:    | Average       |
| Constitution: | Average       |
| Intelligence: | Above Average |
| Personality:  | Reserved      |
| Charisma:     | Average       |
| Alignment:    | Lawful Good   |

#### SKILLS

|             |               |
|-------------|---------------|
| Procedures: | Above Average |
| Command:    | Above Average |



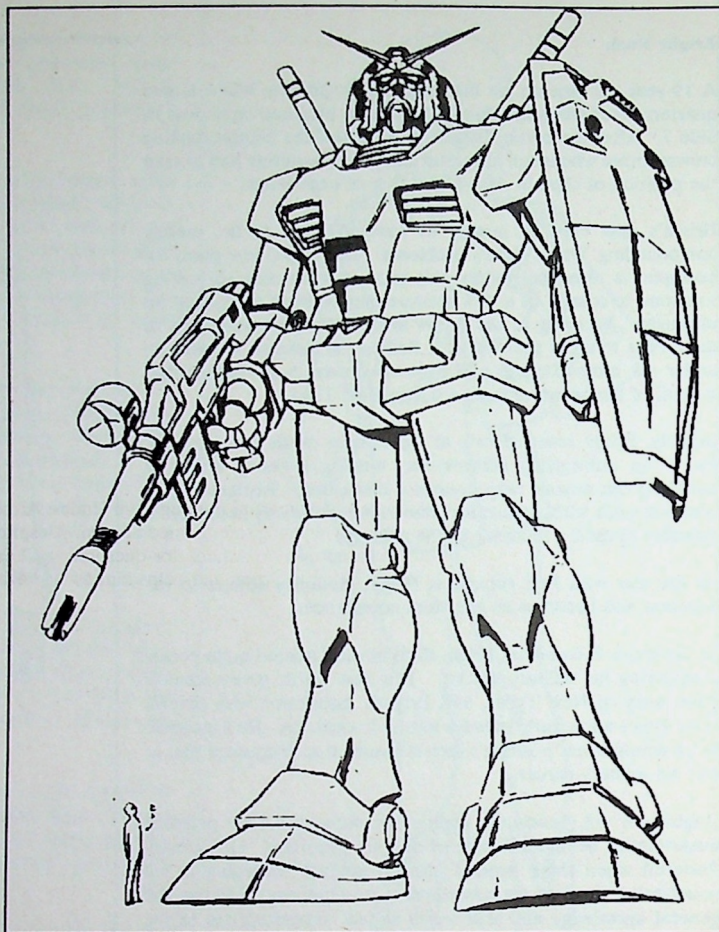


## Mobile Suit Gundam

In the TV series of the same name, the Gundam Mobile Suit is almost as much a character as any of the humans. Gundam represents Earth's last hope against the ruthlessly aggressive Jion space colony.

Gundam is the third in a series of fighting robots, and the first to be a complete success. Gundam is highly maneuverable and adaptable, containing a computer control system which learns to work with its pilot. The strength of this system is that Gundam can actually learn to anticipate its pilots needs, the weakness is that it is very difficult for Gundam to be used by more than one pilot.

Designed for space combat, Gundam is at home in almost any environment, though desert conditions may require special maintenance and limit combat time. Long range weaponry takes the form of huge rifle-shaped cannons, which Gundam wields the way a person would a regular rifle. The primary short range weapon is the beam saber, a sword-like field of coherent energy which is created by generators which also function as the saber's hilt. When not in use, the sabers are stored on Gundam's shoulder. For defense, Gundam comes with a large shield, capable of protecting the powered suit from most explosions.



Gundam is not as inherently powerful as the Zaku Suit, but its power system is better able to sustain damage. During the course of the series, Gundam is sliced into, loses a leg, and takes punishment to a degree which would have demolished the average Zaku.

In some situations, such as when the suit takes high levels of damage, the pilot of Gundam may choose to eject the central portion of Gundam. This section then converts into the Core Fighter, a powerful jet fighter. The shell which is left behind can function independently in a limited fashion, usually giving covering fire while the pilot escapes.

### STATS

|           |               |
|-----------|---------------|
| Strength: | Average       |
| Mobility: | Above Average |
| Armor:    | Above Average |
| AI:       | Average       |

### ARMAMENT

|                  |
|------------------|
| Beam Saber (2)   |
| Chain Gun (1)    |
| Shield (1)       |
| Core Fighter (1) |



## ARION

Arion is a sweeping epic by Yasuhiko Yoshikazu, who also directed **Crusher Joe**. Set against a backdrop of Greek mythology, this film seeks to explore the turbulent nature of the legendary times, rather than following directly from established myth. Many of the god-like characters--known as Titans--resemble their mythical counterparts, having similar names and personalities, but the focal characters were all created for the film.



Arion

While the Titans are obviously modeled after the ancient race of gods in that they possess supernatural abilities such as teleportation, they are not generally portrayed as taking non-corporeal forms: they are more like a vastly superior race of humans. They are able to pass as human, mate with humans, and are skillful manipulators of human followers. The Titans have divided into realms similar to those seen in classic myth. Poseidon rules the sea and Hades the underworld, though Zeus rules the land, rather than the sky. There is constant warring between the Titans, and planning for or recuperating from battle occupies much of their time.

The story begins with the kidnapping of Arion, son of Demeter, who is blind. Seeking to absent herself from the constant fighting, Demeter had travelled far from Olympus, and Arion grew up greatly ignorant of his heritage. Once he is kidnapped by Hades, Arion is told that Zeus cursed Demeter, causing her blindness. Arion also comes to realize that he is the son of Poseidon and a member of the Titan race.

After receiving martial training from Hades, Arion begins his quest to confront Zeus. He is joined by a young thief named Seneca. Despite his training, Arion is captured by Ares and handed over to Athena for questioning. Lesfeena, a mute girl who serves Athena, takes a liking to Arion and helps him escape execution.

Arion joins Poseidon's forces. Poseidon explains his plans to defeat Zeus, becoming the chief god, and tells Arion that Lesfeena is Arion's twin sister. In a subsequent attack against Zeus' forces, Arion kills Ares and attacks Athena. As Athena escapes with the aid of Apollon, Arion gives chase. He is unsuccessful, but meets Hades.

Accusing Hades of manipulating Poseidon and Zeus, Arion attacks and kills the god of the underworld. Hades utters a curse with his dying breath, and Arion is stricken with a maddening illness. Fever-stricken, Arion kills Poseidon. From this point, things become even more complicated.

Arion is rescued from an almost suicidal fit of depression by Black Lion King, who directs Arion to visit Ryukaon, King of Arcadia. Ryukaon relates the history of the Titans, including the birth of the Titans to Chronus and Gaia. This only intensifying Arion's dislike of the constant Titan family struggles.

After joining forces with Guid, an ogre, Arion reaches Olympus. The final confrontation results in the fall of Zeus, and further revelations about Arion's birth--he's actually the son of Prometheus, who has been living in disguise as Black Lion King. Pandora, Arion's mother, was killed by Zeus and Arion was substituted for one of Demeter's twins. When Prometheus is slain, Lesfeena's Titan nature comes to the fore and she kills Gaia.

Apollon kills Zeus, claiming to live up to the family tradition. Arion and Lesfeena survive the final conflict and look forward to the possibility of a peaceful future.

Despite the highly involved interrelationships which are virtually impossible for a non-Japanese speaker to follow, **Arion** features sweeping battle scenes and highly detailed art. Yasuhiko Yoshikazu has a great sense of storytelling, and his direction makes **Arion** well worth watching.



Apollon



## ARION

Born in a very turbulent time, Arion is protected from violent family infighting by his mother Demeter. Arion grows in relative safety, but also in ignorance of much of his heritage. When he finally does discover the facts surrounding his birth, Arion is driven seek revenge the most powerful members of his own family.

Arion is a very dedicated, with strong emotions. He is very loyal to his mother and friends, and an extremely determined enemy. Though initially somewhat naive, Arion learns quickly how to take advantage of own abilities, and how to benefit from the abilities of others.

Arion's greatest strengths are on the battlefield. He is a warrior rather than a leader, but succeeds by joining those with a similar cause, providing the raw fighting ability needed to make an attack work.

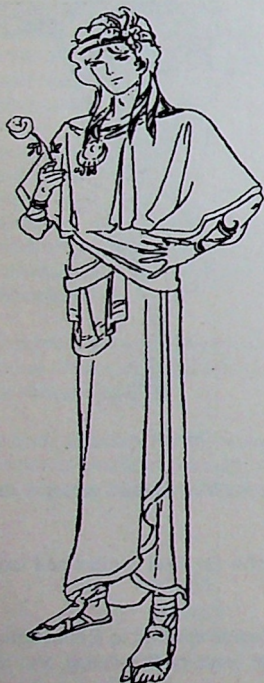
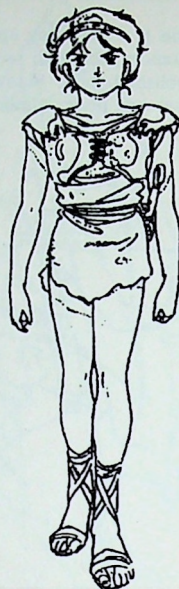
As a member of the Titan race, Arion possesses abilities well beyond those of even the most vital human being. The stats listed below are in relation to other Titans, not humans.

### STATS

|               |              |
|---------------|--------------|
| Strength:     | Superior     |
| Dexterity:    | Superior     |
| Constitution: | Superior     |
| Intelligence: | Superior     |
| Charisma:     | Superior     |
| Personality:  | Dedicated    |
| Alignment:    | Chaotic Good |

### SKILLS

|                |          |
|----------------|----------|
| Swordfighting: | Superior |
| Spear:         | Superior |



## Apollon

Generally preferring the company of women to men, Apollon is considered by many members of his family to be a worthless playboy. They see him as frittering away his time on pointless pleasures rather than in amassing more power for himself. While the Titan's assessment of Apollon is largely true, he is nonetheless a skillful manipulator and very capable in battle should he decide that combat is necessary.

Apollon outwardly appears to be a normal adult human male, though he possesses all the traits of a full-blooded Titan, excelling in areas requiring intelligence and dexterity. He is tall, blond, considered very attractive, and uses his natural charisma to charm many humans (especially women.) Other Titans are immune to his great charm, but even they tend to underestimate his abilities. Apollon chooses his battles carefully, often letting others fight for him, or striking when least expected.

The stats listed below are in comparison to other Titans, not normal humans.

### STATS

|               |                 |
|---------------|-----------------|
| Strength:     | Average         |
| Dexterity:    | Superior        |
| Constitution: | Superior        |
| Intelligence: | Superior        |
| Charisma:     | Superior        |
| Personality:  | Sly             |
| Alignment:    | Chaotic Neutral |

### SKILLS

|                |               |
|----------------|---------------|
| Archery:       | Superior      |
| Manipulation:  | Superior      |
| Strategy:      | Superior      |
| Teleportation: | Above Average |





## Lesfeena

Appearing to be a normal human girl, Lesfeena is actually one of the most powerful members of the Titan race. For the earlier part of her life, Lesfeena functions as Athena's handmaid and is subject to great mental and physical abuse, apparently causing her to become mute.

Despite being the subject of such mistreatment, Lesfeena is a very gentle person. She tends to be somewhat passive, which only encourages Athena to take further advantage. Apollon also has designs on Lesfeena, hoping to take her as his wife and sire a new, powerful line of Titans—though Lesfeena has other ideas.

Lesfeena aids Arion in his escape from Athena and later helps in his conquest of Olympus. During the final assault, her full Titan powers are revealed.

Lesfeena's stats are given relative to Titans, not humans, and are listed before her full realization of her Titan heritage.

### STATS

Strength: Average  
 Dexterity: Average  
 Constitution: Average  
 Intelligence: Average  
 Personality: Kind  
 Charisma: Above Average  
 Alignment: Lawful Good

### SKILLS

No special skills

## Athena

As one of Zeus' children, Athena struggles against Poseidon and Hades to maintain her father's position as the most powerful of the Titans, though her ambition doesn't end there. Athena plans to ultimately rule Olympus, first by defeating her father's foes, then Zeus himself. To accomplish her goals, Athena is willing to use whatever means necessary, even attempting the seduction of her own brother, Apollon, in order to foster more power for herself.

Athena is an extremely beautiful, intelligent woman, but she is also very vengeful and underhanded. When rebuffed by Apollon, she takes out her ire on the helpless Lesfeena with a merciless beating, and she regularly uses murder against her opponents. Seeing Lesfeena as her primary foe, Athena makes several unsuccessful attempts to kill her own handmaiden.

As the general of one of Zeus' armies, Athena has a high degree of experience in all areas of the military.

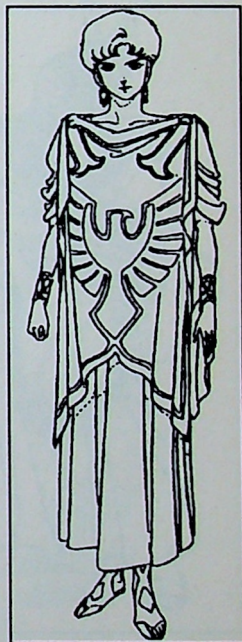
Athena's stats are given in relation to other Titans, not humans.

### STATS

Strength: Above Average  
 Dexterity: Average  
 Constitution: Above Average  
 Intelligence: Above Average  
 Personality: Power-hungry  
 Charisma: Average  
 Alignment: Lawful Evil

### SKILLS

Strategy: Above Average  
 Swordfighting: Above Average  
 Lash: Above Average  
 Spear: Above Average





## Guid

Guid is a three-eyed ogre who befriends Arion and joins in the fight against Zeus and Olympus. He is extremely strong, even by Titan standards, and he is completely loyal to Arion.

About ten feet tall, Guid is an imposing figure. His huge muscles and furry body make him appear to be fierce and evil, but he is normally quite gentle unless forced into battle--at which time he becomes an almost unstoppable fighting machine.

Guid's stats are given relative to Titans, not humans.

### STATS

Strength: Above Average  
Dexterity: Average  
Const.: Above Average  
Intell.: Below Average  
Persnlty: Simple-minded  
Charisma: Poor  
Algmt: Chaotic Good

### SKILLS

Hand-to-hand: Superior  
Spear: Average



## Zeus

Though Zeus is technically the most powerful of the Titans, he prefers to use his children to do his work for him. Remaining in the safety of Olympus, He relies on the power of Gaia to sustain his position as chief Titan.

Like all other Titans, Zeus possesses supernatural powers in addition to strength, speed, and agility well beyond human levels. Much of Zeus' power comes from his relationship with Gaia, his wife and mother. The strength of Gaia, combined with the military ability of their children Athena and Ares, manage to keep Zeus' enemies at bay.

The seeds of disarray Zeus planted to maintain his position turn out to be his ultimate downfall. When Arion cuts through the complex web of plot and counter-plot, taking the battle to Olympus, Zeus is finally defeated.

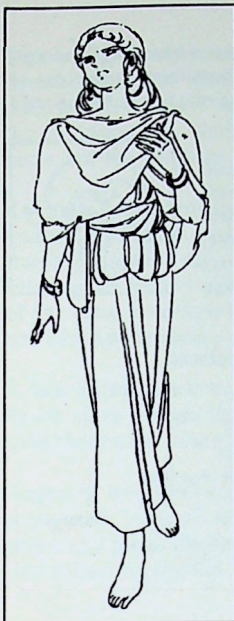
### STATS

Strength: Above Average  
Dexterity: Average  
Constitution: Above Average  
Intelligence: Above Average  
Personality: Cowardly  
Charisma: Poor  
Alignment: Lawful Evil

### SKILLS

Strategy: Above Average





## Demeter

Disgusted by the constant battling between factions of Olympus, Demeter escaped to Thrace with Arion. She has been stricken by blindness, but otherwise retains all the abilities of a member of the Titan race. Like the goddess of classic myth, Demeter is the goddess of harvest.

Demeter is surprisingly gentle, considering her family's proclivity for violence. She prefers the quite life of a sheep herder. While this doesn't give her much worldly power, she does manage to be one of the few surviving Titans by the end of **Arion**.

An attractive woman, Demeter has a calm bearing. It is unclear whether Demeter ever regains her sight.

Demeter's stats are given in relation to other Titans, not humans.

### STATS

Strength: Average  
Dexterity: Average  
Constitution: Average  
Intelligence: Average  
Personality: Kind  
Charisma: Above Average  
Alignment: Lawful Good

### SKILLS

No special skills

## Poseidon

As one of Zeus' brothers, Poseidon struggles against Zeus and Hades for the position as the most powerful of the Titans. Poseidon rules the sea, seeking to overwhelm Olympus with an attack by a massive navy. Working against Poseidon are Zeus' children Athena and Ares, who command the armies of Olympus, and Hades, who hopes to move into a position of power after his opponents destroy each other.

Poseidon is a large, powerfully built male who has all the powers of the Titan race. He is a skilled leader.

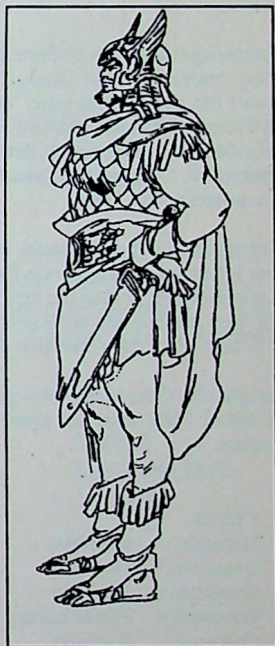
Poseidon's stats are given in relation to other Titans, not humans.

### STATS

Strength: Above Average  
Dexterity: Average  
Constitution: Above Average  
Intelligence: Above Average  
Personality: Power-hungry  
Charisma: Average  
Alignment: Lawful Evil

### SKILLS

Strategy: Above Average  
Swordfighting: Above Average  
Sailing: Above Average  
Command: Average







## Prometheus

Unlike other Titans, Prometheus looked kindly upon humans, even marrying Pandora—a human woman. As punishment for aiding the humans, Prometheus is cast out of Olympus. Disguising himself as Black Lion King, Prometheus remains in hiding until Arion leads an assault against Olympus.

In his normal form, Prometheus is an extremely handsome male Titan. In disguise as the Black Lion King, Prometheus appears to be a man with the face of a lion. In either form, he possesses great self-assurance and dedication of purpose. Despite his exile, Prometheus remains alert to the constant power-shifts among Titans, and is quick to seize the most appropriate moment to take action.



Prometheus' stats are given in relation to other Titans, not humans.

### STATS

Strength: Average  
Dexterity: Average  
Constitution: Above Average  
Intelligence: Above Average  
Personality: Humane  
Charisma: Above Average  
Alignment: Lawful Good

### SKILLS

Disguise: Expert  
Strategy: Above Average

## Gaia

Following the deaths of Chronus and Uranus, Gaia is the most powerful of the Titans. In fact, her great power dwarf the power of all other Titans, even Zeus. The gap of strength between Gaia and other Titans is similar to the gap between Titans and humans. Zeus' claim to the throne of Olympus is based almost entirely on his relationship with Gaia.

Though taking human shape, Gaia is almost one hundred feet tall when she appears in Olympus. She is not kind or compassionate, setting her family members—especially her children—against one another in a constant power struggle. It is only after Gaia dies that Olympus falls.

Simply put, Gaia is the most powerful being in the world of Arion. Her stats are given in relation to Titans, not humans.



### STATS

Strength: God-like  
Dexterity: God-like  
Constitution: God-like  
Personality: Power-hungry  
Charisma: Average  
Alignment: Lawful Evil

### SKILLS

As needed.



## Orguss

This complex action-adventure program features time travel, alternate dimensions, and a host of unusual combat vehicles. The story begins when Kei, a young fighter pilot, is involved in the placement of a giant dimensional bomb. When the bomb goes off unexpectedly, Kei is transported to another dimension, where the explosion of a similar bomb has caused several different realities to implode into one. The predominate races are the Ehmaan and Chiram.

Kei joins with Ehmaan and becomes pilot of the transforming robot Orguss. He is befriended by Moohm, an android fashioned in the shape of a little girl. Moohm quickly develops a crush on Kei, and her ways of showing affection are very troublesome to Kei. For his part, Kei is much more interested in a relationship with Mimsey, an teenage Ehmann girl who is uncertain about her feelings toward Kei. Mimsey, like other females of her race, is completely human in appearance with the exception of two tail-like appendages growing from her hair and trailing down her back.

A less human associate of Kei's is Jabi, an intelligent, dragon-like alien. Jabi is a kind creature, and a tragic figure since he has lost his family and is apparently the only surviving member of his race. He becomes something of a father figure to Kei.

**Orguss** is brought to us by the same production company as **Macross**, and it provides similar thrills in battle sequences. Aspects of the story can be difficult to follow, especially the conclusion, as the plot involves time-travel and the associated potential for paradox. This series is quite entertaining and includes some of the more interesting equipment designs.



### Moohm

Moohm is an android created in the shape of a young girl. She is overly emotional and somewhat clumsy. Her appearance and personality are virtually indistinguishable from that of an average pre-teen human girl, except for the fact that she has green hair.

During the course of **Orguss**, Moohm carries a torch for Kei, despite the fact it is abundantly clear that Kei doesn't return her affections. Kei sees Moohm as a child, and her general behavior does little to counter that assessment. Kei's attitude toward Moohm isn't helped by the fact that, in a rush, she accidentally spills hot tea in his lap.

#### STATS

|               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| Strength:     | Average       |
| Dexterity:    | Below Average |
| Constitution: | Above Average |
| Intelligence: | Average       |
| Charisma:     | Average       |
| Personality:  | Love-struck   |
| Alignment:    | Lawful Good   |

#### SKILLS

No special skills



## Kei

A young fighter pilot, Kei finds himself suddenly transported to another reality after a dimensional bomb explodes prematurely. He quickly allies himself with the Ehmaan, one of the dominant races on the new world, and becomes the pilot of a powerful multi-form battle vehicle called Orguss.

Through various battles, Kei proves himself to be a skillful pilot and a trustworthy warrior. He continues to be confused by distortions in time and space, finding himself at one point in his own past--and possibly the father of his own Earth girlfriend.

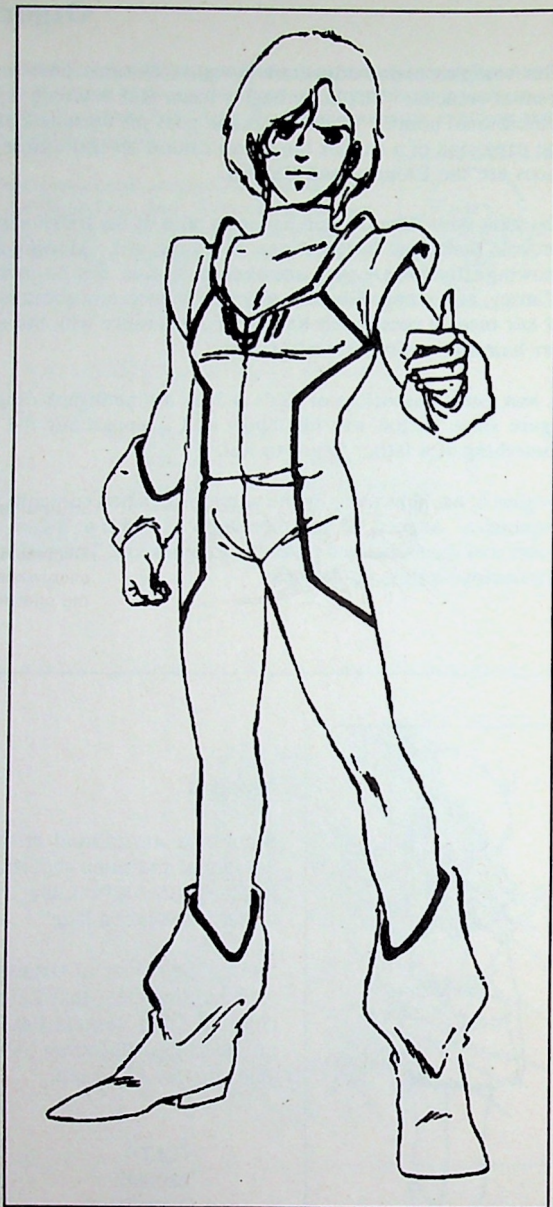
Kei is an attractive young man and quite a "lady killer." His relationships often land him in trouble--his first appearance shows him escaping from an irate parent of a satisfied young woman. In the alternate dimension he suffers from other problems: he's adored by the android Moohm, but can't quite resolve his feelings toward Mimsey, a beautiful young Ehmaan female.

His embarrassment over Moohm's attentions show that Kei is not entirely without morals. Moohm almost literally throws herself at Kei, but he turns her aside--partly because she's an android, but primarily because she is designed as a child. Kei would much rather have the company of an adult woman.

Among Kei's other companions is Jabi, a dragon-like being who, like Kei, is trapped away from his home dimension. The two are sympathetic to one another and Jabi often gives Kei the advantage of his superior experience in the new dimension. Unlike Kei, who was single, Jabi's situation is much more trying since he lost his family in the dimensional implosion.

Kei is tall, handsome and athletic, possessing all the skills and training of a fighter pilot. He quickly learns to handle new aircraft and is capable in battle. He's loyal to his chosen cause, but may be fickle in personal relationships. In the end, Kei is willing to risk the ultimate personal sacrifice.

The ending of **Orguss** leaves Kei's fate in question, so it is not known how successful he was in his final mission.



### STATS

|               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| Strength:     | Above Average |
| Dexterity:    | Above Average |
| Constitution: | Above Average |
| Intelligence: | Average       |
| Personality:  | Self-assured  |
| Charisma:     | Above Average |
| Alignment:    | Chaotic Good  |

### SKILLS

|          |        |
|----------|--------|
| Pilot:   | Expert |
| Gunnery: | Expert |



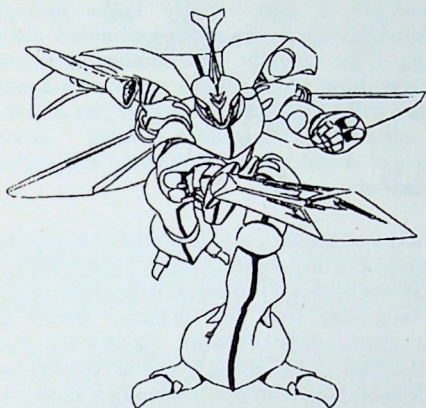
## Aura Battler Dunbine

Written and directed by Yoshiyuki Tomino, **Dunbine** is a strange, interesting mix of science fiction and fantasy. It begins when Sho Zama, a young motorcyclist, is suddenly transported to another dimension to a land called Byston Well. This strange land is inhabited by humans as well as small, fairie-like creatures.

Sho was kidnapped to Byston Well by Drake Luft, who wants Sho to pilot Dunbine. Like other Aura Battlers, Dunbine requires the pilot to possess a certain "aura strength" which activates the machine's abilities. Unfortunately for Sho, humans of our dimension possess great aura power than those of Byston Well.

Things are not destined to go smoothly for Sho. He accepts the position as Dunbine's pilot, but comes to discover that Luft's goals are much less than admirable.

This series features some of the more interesting mechanical designs seen in Japanese animation, with much of the inspiration being taken from insects. The animation is smooth and vivid, making this a fine example of Japanese television.



### Aura Battler Dunbine

Like other Aura Battlers, Dunbine is somewhat insectoid in design. This is especially appropriate since movement is controlled by artificial muscles which are protected by an armor-like exoskeleton.

Dunbine is capable of flight, weaponry consists of a sword and energy beams. Dunbine is approximately thirty feet tall and houses the pilot in its torso.

Aura Battlers require that the pilot possess a high level of "aura power," an area where Earth humans seem to excel. Dunbine's stats are in relation to other Aura Battlers.

#### STATS

|           |         |
|-----------|---------|
| Strength: | Average |
| Mobility: | Average |
| Armor:    | Average |
| AI:       | None    |

#### ARMAMENT

|                 |
|-----------------|
| Sword (1)       |
| Energy Beam (2) |

## Sho Zama

A motorcyclist from Earth, Sho is suddenly transported to another dimension where he finds himself in the middle of a war for total domination on Byston Well. He is confused by the struggle, but agrees to become pilot of Dunbine.

Sho is a reasonably attractive human teenaged male. He begins with little skill at piloting, but his extreme aura power makes him a natural Aura pilot. He learns combat skills literally "on the fly."

#### STATS

|               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| Strength:     | Average       |
| Dexterity:    | Above Average |
| Constitution: | Average       |
| Intelligence: | Average       |
| Personality:  | Self-assured  |
| Charisma:     | Above Average |
| Alignment:    | Lawful Good   |

#### SKILLS

|             |               |
|-------------|---------------|
| Cycling:    | Above Average |
| Piloting:   | Above Average |
| Aura Power: | Above Average |





## Megazone 23



Yui

Written by Hoshiyama Hiroyuki and directed by Ishiguro Noboru, **Megazone 23** is an engaging look at the future. As an "Original Video Animation" or OVA program, the character designs and animation surpass those normally seen in Japanese programs. This comment isn't intended to denigrate the TV shows, but to emphasize the greater effort put into programs aimed at the direct video market. Somewhere between TV and theatrical release, OVA offer more screen time, good production values, and a wider range of story ideas than is available on television.

In the late twentieth century, Earth is invaded by aliens from planet Kira. In a last effort to escape destruction, the Earth launches a huge generation ship containing the remains of the population. The ship is controlled by the super computer Bahamoud which keeps the inhabitants convinced they live in 20th century Tokyo through sophisticated computer simulations and brainwashing techniques. Only the military knows the reality of the situation. Five centuries pass and it is discovered that the aliens have tracked them down once again. B.D., a high-ranking military official, wishes to prepare the ship for war but Bahamoud is unwilling to surrender control. Army reprogrammers begin trying to overthrow the computer and regain control of the ship and its citizens.

Shogo Yahagi, a young denizen of the city, is summoned to a parking garage by his friend Shinji who is a test pilot for one of the military's weapons contractors. He shows Shogo a prototype motorcycle called the Garland which he has "borrowed" from the company. Before he can explain the bike's function, government operatives show up to retrieve their hardware. Shinji is killed as Shogo narrowly escapes on the Garland. He decides to expose the bike to the public by video phoning the television show of Eve Tokimatsuri, an ultra-popular singer and talk show host. But Eve is actually a computer animation used by Bahamoud to influence the public, and Shogo is kept on the line as B.D.'s agents close in.

As Shogo leaves the phone booth, he is pursued by three cyclists on strange-looking bikes. Unable to catch Shogo because of his skillful riding, the agents pull into the back of army trucks where their machines transform into battlesuits. A startled Shogo exclaims "Robots", unwittingly voice activating the Garland's own transformation sequence. The Garland collides with the trucks and only Shogo survives the explosion due to the superior strength of his battlesuit.

Later, while running from the police with one of his friends, Shogo stumbles onto the entrance to the vast Bahamoud complex beneath the city where he encounters B.D. and some of his troopers. A battle ensues and Shogo miraculously destroys them all except B.D. who reveals the truth of the city's situation. Shogo cannot bring himself to murder B.D. and leaves him.

Once again hoping to expose the cover-up, Shogo sneaks into the television studio where he discovers the truth about Eve. The



Eve



army gains control of Bahamoud and begin to prepare the populace for war by staging the bombing of a Japanese tanker by a foreign "enemy". They are just in time as the first alien wave attacks and is repulsed by the military forces.



Shogo

Part One is heavily influenced by shows such as *Macross*, Part Two is more like the film *Akira* than anything else. While *Akira* is a great source of inspiration, the changes between the two parts are so dramatic that it's almost as if the two parts are actually two different movies.

Taking advantage of the greater freedom of OVA release, the creators of *Megazone 23 Part 2* have added much more graphic violence as well as R-rated love scenes. This is obviously intended for more mature audiences, but some viewers find a feeling of discontinuity between the two versions.

As the story continues, the alien invaders manage to break through Megazone's defenses and kill most of the soldiers in a particularly nasty fashion--the aliens have long tentacles which invade human bodies, bursting them from the inside.

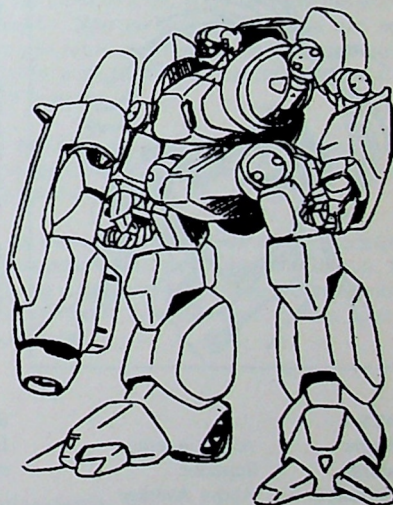
The motorcycle gang which are the central focus of Part Two make their way through the various levels of the space colony, finally discovering the main computer room where they discover the Bahamoud computer which is the source of Eve. Due to the great damage the ship is suffering, Eve is losing her ability to function. Finally, the group find their way outside the ship and discover they have landed on a planet. Is it Earth? Will they be safe here? We're left to wonder as the episode ends.

Both episodes have their own merits and are recommended.

B.D. wants Shogo and his friends out of the way once and for all. His operatives break into his apartment and kill Tomomi, a young film maker who was shooting a picture using Shogo and the Garland. Shogo comes home to find his friend dead. Enraged, he returns to the bahamoud complex to destroy the super computer. Just as he prepares to blast a vital area, he runs out of ammo. B.D. and his men catch up to him in their own battlesuits. Shogo and B.D. engage in one-on-one combat and the out-classed Shogo is easily defeated. Just then, B.D. receives word that the second enemy wave is approaching and leaves the battered Shogo to crawl home. Defeated for now, Shogo remains determined to fight another day.

So ends *Megazone 23* part one, but the story continues with part two. Sort of.

The animation and story-telling style between the two parts are quite different, and fans of one part may not care for the other. Where *Megazone 23*



Megazone Battlesuit



## Shogo Yahagi

An average eighteen year old guy, Shogo lives the life of an average twentieth-century teenager. He loves his motorcycle, likes girls, and works at McDonald's for a living. Like others of his city, Shogo doesn't initially realize that he's actually living on a space colony which is travelling through interstellar space.

Shogo has no particular skills or motivation in his life, until he discovers and takes the Garland motorcycle. He initially intends to return the motorcycle, but events convince him that it would possibly be fatal to do so. When he attempts to call public attention to the existence of the cycle, he becomes a target for Megazone's computer defense systems.

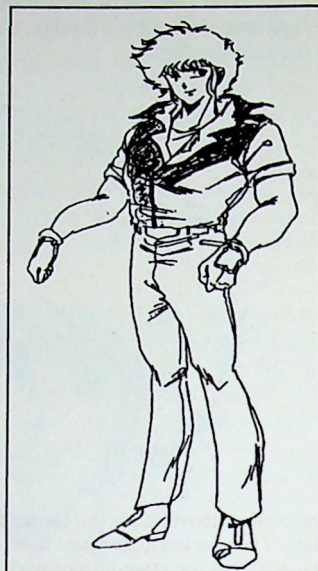
Despite his lack of preparation, Shogo rises to the challenge and manages to defend himself from multiple assaults. Ultimately though, Shogo finds himself out of his league.

### STATS

|               |              |
|---------------|--------------|
| Strength:     | Average      |
| Dexterity:    | Average      |
| Constitution: | Average      |
| Intelligence: | Average      |
| Personality:  | Friendly     |
| Charisma:     | Average      |
| Alignment:    | Chaotic Good |

### SKILLS

|             |          |
|-------------|----------|
| Motorcycle: | Superior |
|-------------|----------|



## Eve Tokimatsuri

Eve in a unique character in Megazone 23--she's not even real.

A computer generated image, Eve is actually the personality of the computer which runs and operates the Megazone space station. She appears on television as a dancer, entertaining and distracting the populace from the reality of their situations. Though the computer has deliberately using brainwashing techniques to blind the people of Megazone 23 to the fact that they're in a space colony, Eve suffers from the lack of trained helped when aliens catch up with the ship.

Eve appears to viewers as a beautiful young woman who is the host of her own television show. She's loved by almost everyone, and is generally considered to be the ultimate role model for teen girls.

The stats listed below are for the Eve's apparent characteristics.

### STATS

|               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| Strength:     | Above Average |
| Dexterity:    | Superior      |
| Constitution: | Above Average |
| Intelligence: | Above Average |
| Personality:  | Very Friendly |
| Charisma:     | God-like      |
| Alignment:    | Lawful Good   |

### SKILLS

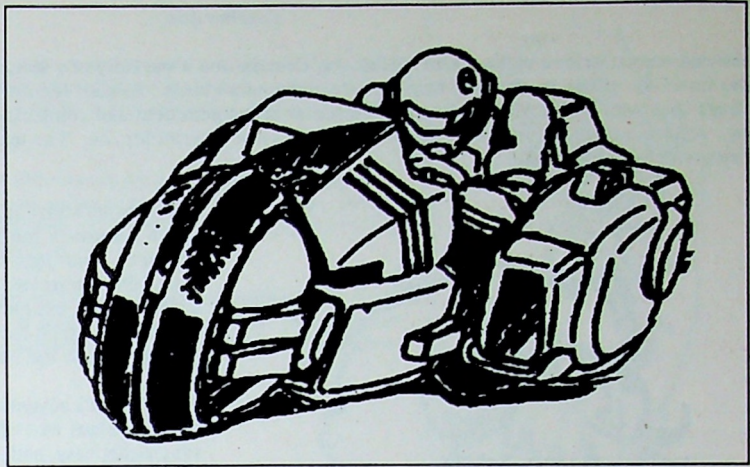
Eve can communicate directly via television or telephone to almost any point in Megazone 23



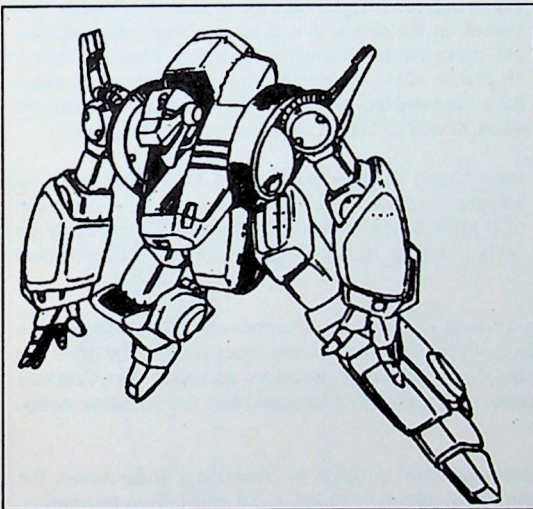
## Garland

In the OVA series *Megazone 23*, the Garland is a pivotal element. It is Shogo's discovery of the Garland which leads him to discover the truth about his environment.

The Garland appears to be only a motorcycle--though admittedly an incredibly fast, very expensive motorcycle. When Shogo takes it for a ride, he has no idea that he's actually stealing an advanced fighting suit. When properly activated, the Garland undergoes a transformation process which converts it into powered armor, fully protecting the driver.



The picture above shows the Garland's initial configuration. During transformation, the Garland raises back on its rear wheel, allowing the front wheel to separate and move up on the pilot's torso. The two halves of the front wheel form the "shoulders" of the powered suit, and the front struts become the suit's arms: The rear wheel moves up and the two side panels drop down to form the fighter's legs. The entire transformation takes only a few moments--a fact which is of vital importance to Shogo, since he initially activates the transformation while being sprayed by gunfire.



The Garland also features a rifle-like side arm which the pilot uses as one would use a normal rifle. The final configuration of the Garland is shown to the left.

The pilot of the Garland is not in the same configuration as the Garland. That is, his arms and legs are not enclosed by the arms and legs of the powered suit. Rather, the pilot is housed in the Garland's torso where armor is the strongest.

Controls on the Garland must be relatively simple, since Shogo, an average teenage guy, is able to figure them out fairly quickly without training.

Apparently, the Garland is a prototype vehicle intended to defend the Megazone Space Colony from alien assault. In *Megazone 23*, any mention of the Garland over telephone, TV, or radio will result in a man-hunt for the person mentioning the cycle.

### STATS

|           |               |
|-----------|---------------|
| Strength: | Average       |
| Mobility: | Above Average |
| Armor:    | Average       |
| AI:       | None          |

### ARMAMENT

Beam Rifle (1)



## Crusher Joe

Directed and co-written by Yasuhiko Yoshikazu, *Crusher Joe* is the story of a team of trouble shooters—or Crushers—who travel the galaxy performing hazardous missions of all kinds. Joining Joe are Talos, Ricky, and Alfin. Talos is a huge man who resembles Frankenstein's monster in temperament and complexion. Ricky is a short, wiry teenage boy. Alfin is a young woman who may be a potential love interest for Joe. The team travels in the starship *Minerva*, a moderately armed cruiser.



Crusher Joe

assumed name taken by Joseph Dodge, a known criminal who is hiding in the Lagoru system. The Crushers immediately head for Minaus, capital of the Lagoru system.

After several crosses and double-crosses, the Crushers finally discover that the ship disappearances are caused by a new warp drive which allows the user to move objects from any point in the galaxy to any other point. The drive has been damaged and continued use could destroy the fabric of space and ultimately the entire universe. The Crushers agree to destroy the drive, which they do. They clear their names, with the help of Kowalski and the Universe Army, and restore their reputations.

*Crusher Joe* is a beautiful film, with the same strengths as *Arlon* and other projects by Yoshikazu. Like *Arlon*, the detailed story is difficult for non-Japanese speakers to follow, but there's plenty of action which requires no translation. *Crusher Joe* was reasonably successful, spawning Original Video Animation episodes for the direct market. Though the show has not been a massive hit, it did give rise to one of the most popular animation series of the 80's.

In one scene of *Crusher Joe*, the Crushers meet in the lot of a drive-in theater. The film on the screen features two teenage girls involved in an unexplained adventure. Animation fans were so fascinated by this "film within a film" that a series based on the drive-in picture was created. The series was called *Dirty Pair*, a show which has become wildly popular on both sides of the Pacific. Both *Dirty Pair* and *Crusher Joe* are highly recommended viewing for any animation fan.

The Crusher's first appearance is a *Star Wars* style epic which features a remarkable array of equipment, alien creatures, and fight scenes. Model makers will be especially interested in the wide variety of models available from this film, including ground assault vehicles such as the ostrich-like Ostall and Skate Boy. Spaceship models include the Harpy and *Minerva*.

The Crusher's adventure begins when they are contacted by Valenstinos who offers them a highly profitable, and supposedly easy, assignment. They are to carry Elena, the daughter of one of the galaxy's ten richest men, to the planet Mikkola. Elena is being kept in cryogenic suspension. The situation is unusual, but Joe and his team take the contract.

As soon as the *Minerva* goes into warp, things start to go wrong. The crew passes out and awakes to find the ship hundreds of light years off course. Everything they loaded on the ship is now missing. When the Crushers are contacted by Colonel Kowalski of Universe Army, he blames them for several ship disappearances which have occurred in the area. The Crushers are released when Kowalski cannot substantiate his accusations.

Joe's father, Crusher Dan, places Joe's entire crew on suspension, driving Joe into depression. He snaps out of it after he discovers that Valenstinos is actually an



## Crusher Joe

Joe is a "Crusher," a galactic trouble-shooter and the son of Crusher Dan, leader of the Crusher Conference. As leaders of his own team, Joe must make tactical decisions. Also, Joe has command of Minerva, an interstellar spacecraft with a moderate level of armament.

An attractive young man, Joe is very dedicated to his crew and his profession. He is frustrated by any defeat, and will take action to restore his good name. He has various connections due to his relationship to the Crusher Conference, and his crew of Crusher's is quite loyal toward him.

There is some speculation that Joe fits into the same timeline/universe as the series **Dirty Pair**. Speculation is that Joe is an ancestor of one of the Pair. Whatever the characters relation to the Pair, his show was definitely a precursor to **Dirty Pair**.

### STATS

|               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| Strength:     | Average       |
| Dexterity:    | Average       |
| Constitution: | Above Average |
| Intelligence: | Above Average |
| Personality:  | Aloof         |
| Charisma:     | Above Average |
| Alignment:    | Chaotic Good  |

### SKILLS

|               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| Piloting:     | Above Average |
| Detect Trap:  | Above Average |
| Leadership:   | Above Average |
| Marksmanship: | Above Average |



## Alfin

Like the other Crushers, Alfin is a trained trouble-shooter. She is enamored with Joe.

### STATS

|               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| Strength:     | Average       |
| Dexterity:    | Above Average |
| Constitution: | Average       |
| Intelligence: | Above Average |
| Personality:  | Friendly      |
| Charisma:     | Average       |
| Alignment:    | Chaotic Good  |

### SKILLS

|               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| Detect Trap:  | Above Average |
| Marksmanship: | Average       |
| Piloting:     | Average       |





## FINDING JAPANESE ANIMATION

Finding Japanese animation in English translation can be difficult, but is much easier with each passing year. In Japan, audiences of all ages have accepted animation as entertainment for decades; in the United States, it has been relegated to the status of "kiddie" programming. Thanks to programs such as *The Simpsons*, American audiences have become more accepting of animation, and video renters and retailers have responded by offering a wider range of animated features.

Many Japanese shows have been translated and syndicated in the U.S., though the translations are often questionable and the distribution limited. Programs such as *Voltron*, *Macron Five*, *Capt. Harlock*, and *Robotech* began life as Japanese TV series. After being censored to fit children's programming standards, these shows occasionally bear only a vague resemblance to the original episodes. In an extreme example, the aforementioned *Robotech* consisted of three different, totally unrelated Japanese series. Also, animated violence is commonly "toned down" by having the heroes claim they are shooting only "robot" tanks or planes. Still, it can be useful to watch these shows to get a general idea of the story.

Many recent, and not so recent, Japanese films and TV shows have been packaged on video. Most frequently, the shows are in English translation, though sometimes the dialogue is sub-titled. It's more difficult to follow a film with sub-titles, but this tends to offer a more accurate translation. Apparently, dubbed shows are more often aimed at children, while those with sub-titles are aimed at a more mature audience.

When searching for video tapes, it's useful to check rental shops--unless you want to purchase tapes. In rental stores, animation is usually consigned to the children's section. If you're willing to check there, look for such films as *Valley of the Winds*, *Vengeance of the Space Pirate*, *Revenge of the Bionoids*, and *Dagger of Kamui*. They started life as *Nausicaa*, *Captain Harlock*, *The Macross Movie*, and *Kamui No Ken*, all Japanese theatrical releases. Surprisingly, the translations are more accurate, though this may be attributable to the fact they weren't marketed to American television. Also in the children's section you might find taped episodes from older shows such as *Speed Racer*, *Tranzor Z*, *Kimba the White Lion* and others, all of which were originally aired in Japan. For tapes aimed at an older audience, check the international section.

Tapes for purchase are available from a variety of sources. Some video stores offer pre-viewed tapes or will order tapes for you, but this is an expensive way to buy. Specialty video or hobby stores have a wider variety and are more likely to have reasonable prices. Also, since many of the tapes are aimed at children, toy stores are a good place to search. National chains such as *Circus World*, *Kaybee*, and *Playland* have offered the feature-length films such as *Locke the Superman* for as low as seven dollars. You'll have to be able to read between the lines, because these films often change the names of characters and sometimes rearrange the details of the plot. Arm yourself with the knowledge of creator's names, which are usually listed on packaging.

Finding manga translations are a bit easier. Companies such as *Marvel*, *Now* and *Comico* have long marketed English versions of Japanese comics. A short list of titles includes *Space Cobra*, *Golgo 13*, *Area 88*, *Akira*, *Speed Racer*, *Crying Freeman*, *Baoh*, *Macross*, *Dominion*, and *Cyber 7*. Translated comics tend to be the most accurate translations of all, since the Japanese creators are able to take a more direct hand in assuring that as little as possible is changed.

Finally, seek out and join an animation fan organization. These groups will be able to point you to sources of Japanese animation and often have showings of current shows. Some animation fans may speak, or be learning to speak, Japanese, or may have access to a native Japanese speaker, enabling them to translate programs on the fly. Some support may be found on computer bulletin boards, depending upon your area. Some boards carry photo files which may be from Japanese shows, while a few boards specialize in Japanese animation. No matter where you are, if you have access to GEnie on-line services, you can access the Japan forum which has several topics on Japanese animation as well as many text files giving translations, reviews, and character descriptions.

We encourage all readers to find and view the original animation, and we hope you have success in developing your own sources of Japanese videos. Enjoy!

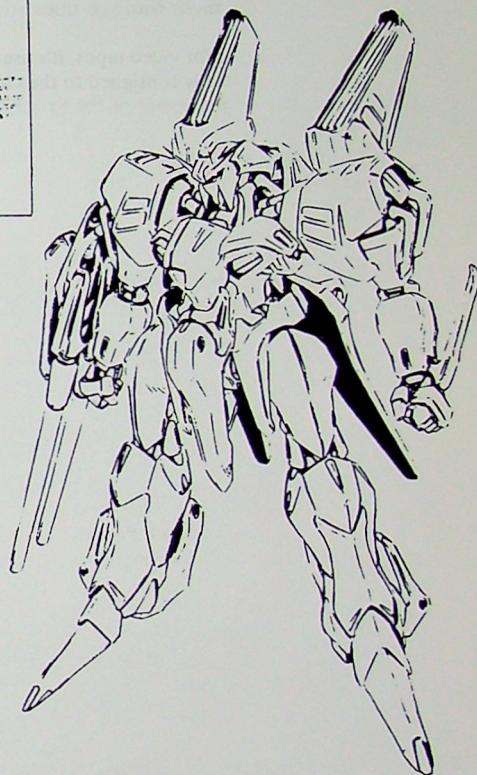
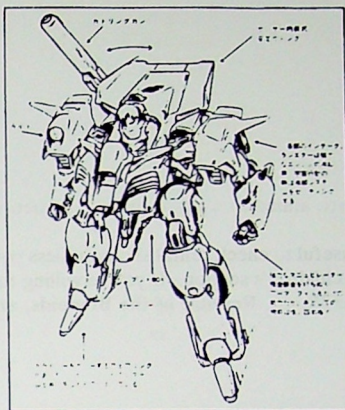
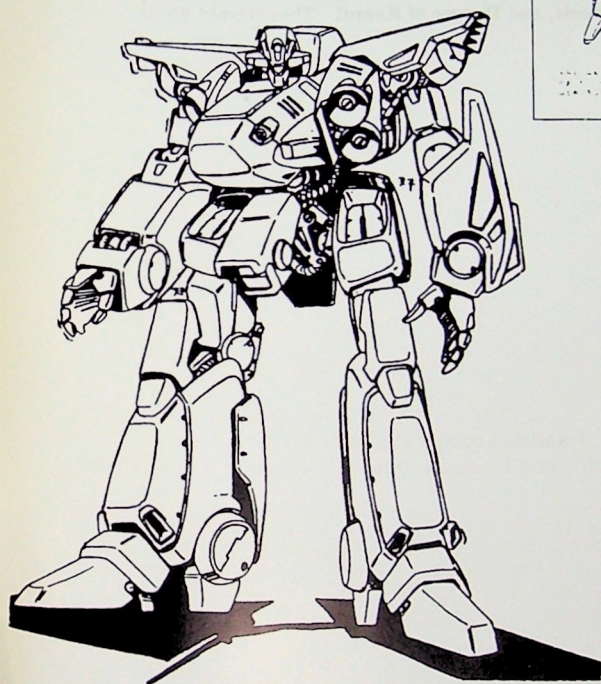


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